

FSM

MAGAZINE

Franciscan Sisters of Mary

Presence

FALL 2017

Founded in 1872, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary is a religious congregation of women within the Roman Catholic Church. Committed to their mission to be the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate, healing Jesus, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary focus the power of their intention on compassionate care of Creation in collaboration with others.

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**Message from
Susan Scholl, FSM
President
Franciscan Sisters of Mary**

A fundamental element of Franciscan spirituality—and an integral part of the FSM life and mission—is presence. Only in the past few years have we begun seeing more in publications about presence—or mindfulness, which is similar to and closely related to presence.

Presence, like mindfulness, means “living in the here and now.” God comes to us—and we to God—through the moments of each day, through those we encounter, through what we experience. If we’re not paying attention—mindlessly going through our day, living in the past, considering what might happen ten minutes or a week from now—we will miss what we are meant to experience in the “here and now.”

A Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, has done some excellent writings on the practice of mindfulness, of finding life in the present moment. “Mindfulness is the seed of enlightenment, awareness, understanding, care, compassion, liberation, transformation and healing. If we practice mindfulness, we get in touch with the refreshing and joyful aspects of life in us and around us, the things we are not able to touch when we live in forgetfulness.” Being present or mindful in our everyday life helps us to recognize, value, and connect with the exquisite beauty of a sunset, the delicious juiciness of an orange, the luscious color of a leaf in the fall. . . . With a distracted mind, we miss all of this!

And now more than ever, when everyone is totally absorbed in I-phones and distracted in their own thoughts, we need to be totally attentive, totally present in our encounters with one another. When we listen to another with complete presence, not only are we giving the gift of presence to them, we are also being transformed by the encounter. By being attentive and receptive to the other person, we receive as much—or more—than we give! We are wired to be connected to one another, and through presence we strengthen that interconnectedness that binds us—and all of creation—together!

As you read this issue of *FSM Magazine*, think about how presence has impacted so many lives—indeed, may have changed history! We hope that the act of actually being present to your day, whether you are eating breakfast or interacting with a coworker, your family, a neighbor, or the checker at the grocery, enhances and enriches your own life as you enrich the lives of others through the invaluable gift of presence—to yourself and to all you encounter.

Susan Scholl, FSM

The Gift of *Presence*



One of the most charming stories about St. Francis of Assisi features his preaching to the birds.

As the story goes, Francis was traveling with a few companions. Along the way, they came to a place on the road where birds filled the trees on both sides. Francis asked his companions to “wait for me while I go to preach to my sisters the birds.”

And so he did. According to the legend, the birds surrounded him—and not a single one flew away as he spoke to them.

In another story, Francis searches out a wolf that has been terrorizing the town of Gubbio, devouring not only their livestock but even some of the townspeople. Finding him, Francis commands the wolf to come to him. The wolf approaches and lies down at his feet. Francis negotiates a peace between the wolf and the town; the wolf agrees to stop killing the townspeople and animals, and the townspeople agree to feed the wolf, who had been killing only out of hunger.

Another extraordinary story about Francis is his meeting with the sultan of the Saracens during the Fifth Crusade. Not only was Francis permitted access to this enemy, but the sultan received him graciously, and they spent several days conversing.

How does one explain such remarkable stories?

Even if the birds were fluent in 13th-century Italian, they wouldn't have needed to hear a sermon. What made them flock to this man?

How to explain a hungry wolf who doesn't devour a defenseless friar all alone on the wolf's turf? A wolf who not only seems to understand the agreement Francis proposes—but even abides by it?

Or a sultan who entertains his enemy and then allows him to return to the crusaders' camp without threat or interference?

The sultan, the wolf, the birds all responded to Francis not so much because of what he said or did, but because of who he was—his authenticity and presence.

What is presence? It is a way of living in the world that encourages encounter—meeting others on a deeper level than if we are preoccupied with the past or the future or other issues.

In his work *Presence and Encounter: The Sacramental Possibilities of Everyday Life*, Dr. David G. Benner says: “There is something magical about presence. . . . Boundaries between self and others soften and sometimes seem to dissolve, leading to a sense of shared oneness” (p. 4).

This is how St. Francis lived—deeply present to the world and to all God's creatures. In his Canticle of the Sun he recognizes sun and moon, animals and plants, even sickness and death, as his brothers and sisters. Is it any wonder that creatures—human and otherwise—flocked to be near him? Here is one who could know and accept them on a deep inner level—nonjudgmentally, attentively—and share that depth of himself with them as well. The wolf knew he was safe in this saint's presence. The birds heard a message that was deeper than words. In Francis's presence the sultan could let go of prejudices and preconceptions and open himself in trust to hear what Francis had to say.



A Way of Living

Presence can't be faked. A person can lock eyes with the speaker, nod at appropriate times, make all the right gestures and noises—but still be preoccupied with making plans for the evening or rehashing an unpleasant clash with a coworker. And the other person will sense that something is missing.

Unlike other creatures, “humans alone have the capacity to create false ways of being. . . . The self we create is a persona—a mixture of the truth of our being and the fictions we spin as we attempt to create a self in the image of an inner fantasy. The simple truth of our being gets lost in the metanarratives we spin. We become the fictions we live” (p. 7).

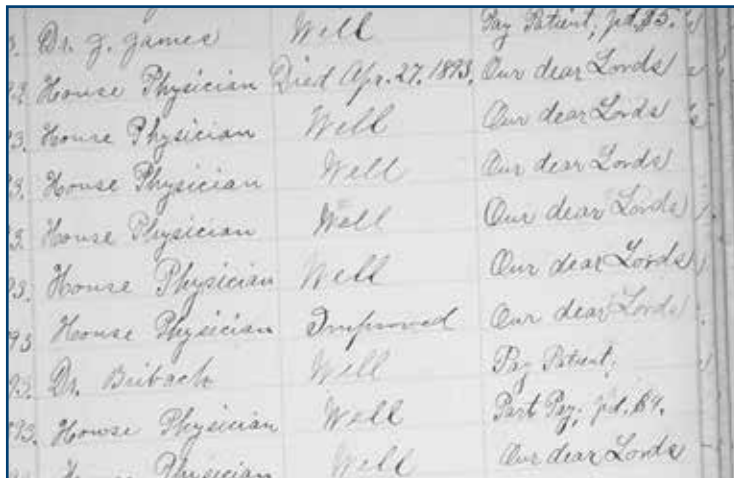
Presence is encounter on a deep, even spiritual level. The person who is truly present is not so much engaging in a behavior as exploring ways to share him- or herself with the other person. The encounter is an “I-Thou” experience, a position of openness and attentiveness to another.

Those who are most present to others are those who have been most successful in moving past the posturing and overthinking, those who are most able to open themselves to the moment and to others in simplicity and open-heartedness.



A Legacy of Presence

Presence. The Franciscan Sisters of Mary have always valued presence. Some years back the FSM defined their Mission: to be the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate, healing Jesus. But throughout their long history, they have lived this gift of presence.



Dr. J. James	Well	By Patient, pt. 82.
House Physician	Died Apr. 27, 1878.	Our dear Lord!
House Physician	Well	Our dear Lord!
House Physician	Well	Our dear Lord!
House Physician	Well	Our dear Lord!
House Physician	Well	Our dear Lord!
House Physician	Improved	Our dear Lord!
Dr. Weibach	Well	By Patient,
House Physician	Well	Part By, pt. 84.
House Physician	Well	Our dear Lord!

Mother Odilia Berger recognized the presence of Christ in the poor and sick she came across the world to serve. The early ledgers note a great number of patients as “ODL”—“Our Dear Lord’s”—meaning they could not pay for their care. Like Francis, she embraced the sick and poor, seeing beyond their poverty to the richness of their souls.

She had a strong sense of presence. Her little band of sisters grew quickly; young women willingly aligned themselves with her vision for serving Christ through serving others. Bankers and businessmen trusted her with large sums of money for hospitals and other ventures. Though she led the sisters for only eight short years before she died in October 1880, the power of her presence has lived on, an inspiration to all the Franciscan Sisters of Mary.



Presence in Health Care

The sisters have spent many, many years in health care, and they always brought that presence to their ministry.

What distinguishes health *care* from mere treatment?

Presence, of course. Most of us can recall doctors or nurses, therapists or aides, whose deep focus on us made a tremendous difference in our recovery. From the moment the healthcare professional enters the room, if he or she is truly present, his or her focus is on the patient on a deep level. This person cares not only about the symptoms that are manifesting, but how the patient is managing, what he or she is feeling—emotionally as well as physically—in this time of deep vulnerability.

It's possible for a doctor, a nurse, or other healthcare professional to treat a patient's illness or injury without ever encountering that person on anything but a superficial level. The diagnosis may be brilliant, the prescription inspired, the therapy letter-perfect. But if the professional is not present to the patient on a level that recognizes and deeply encounters the person, the health care he or she offers is incomplete.

Listen to stories of patients from St. Mary's Health Center in Clayton or St. Mary's Hospital in Madison, those who knew the sisters from St. Mary's Ringling or St. Clare's in Baraboo. Or a dozen different hospitals around the country where the sisters served. What made the care the sisters offered unique was the empathy they shared with their patients through their presence.



The Sisters' Presence in All Their Ministries

Throughout their ministry in health care and beyond, the sisters shared with others much more than their technical knowledge or therapeutic skill. They gave of themselves. They offered the gift of presence.

The sisters' lives of simplicity, of voluntary poverty, have attuned them to being present. Like St. Francis, the sisters have moved beyond striving for power, influence, wealth. Even those in positions of authority have had at heart the needs of those they have led.



For instance, while directing care for the elderly sisters in the convent's skilled nursing section, Sr. Eleanor Krieg said, "I try to be present to the sisters, listening to them, encouraging them, responding to their needs and providing for them as I am able. I also pray with and for them. When I walk out at the end of the day I am aware that I have received much more than I could possibly have given. I have been in touch with women who have given of themselves totally, professionally and in community, and are now dependent on others."



As a hospice nurse, Sr. Evelyn Marie Peterman once said: "Being a pastoral presence is even more a part of the nursing than the physical aspects. Our charism of being the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate Jesus is what I really strive to live. Not just the Jesus in me but I try to see the Jesus in all my patients. They are as much a blessing to me as I may be to them. I know that God uses me." Sr. Evelyn also brought her gift of presence to her ministry to inmates at Algoa and Jefferson City Correctional Centers, helping them find Jesus in themselves through her presence.



Sr. Angela Murdaugh offered presence to women in labor and to other midwives as mentor and leader, providing encouragement, compassion, and quality medical care—a legend both at Holy Family Services in Weslaco, Texas, and within the midwifery profession. When she retired in 2008, she found herself hearing a new call, "to be a midwife to souls," through spiritual direction and Kairos Prison Ministry.

The examples are endless.

Sr. Mary Paul Schmidt, whose thousands of hours of volunteer service eased the hearts of so many anxious patients and family members.



Sr. Ramona Meurer, who even in her 80s would drop everything at a moment's notice when the Red Cross called, leaving home to minister to people devastated by disaster, her presence a reassurance not only of competence but of compassion.

Sr. Marita Anne Marrah, teaching children with speech problems and providing support and advocacy for children in foster care.

Sr. Betty Brucker, who saw Christ in AIDS and HIV patients, offering a place for them to stay when they had nowhere else to go.

Sr. Mary Ellen Lewis, who has worked to bring about peace through forgiveness and reconciliation.

Sr. Mary Joan Meyer, who shared her vision of God's presence in creation through her photographs and poetry.

Sometimes over the years presence has involved public physical presence, having the courage to stand up for what is right in the face of deep opposition. Mother Concordia Puppenthal, for instance, stood firm, way ahead of the times in setting up a hospital for African American patients and staffed by African American doctors and nurses in an era of deep prejudice against African Americans.

In March 1965, just after Bloody Sunday, Sr. Antona Ebo and Sr. Eugene Marie Smith flew to Selma, Alabama, to stand up for the rights of African Americans to vote; their presence there and Sr. Antona's words helped change the face of the Civil Rights Movement.

For many years the sisters have provided an intercessory prayer ministry—a ministry of presence to those who are hurting or in need.

For more than a decade the sisters have taken to the airwaves, offering a monthly radio message of hope and encouragement, a moment of presence and compassion.

Since moving to Bridgeton in 2011, the FSM have been a strong presence in advocating for the safety of residents threatened by the Bridgeton and West Lake Landfills. Thousands of tons of radioactive waste dumped in the unlined West Lake Landfill in the 1970s—and

an underground fire in the adjoining Bridgeton Landfill that is moving steadily toward the radioactive wastes—pose great danger for residents and businesses in the area. The sisters have been an active voice advocating for more transparency and greater commitment to the safety of their neighbors. Besides attending meetings and calling and writing letters to elected officials, they hold a biweekly prayer vigil across from the Bridgeton Landfill, offering presence, compassion—and advocacy—for all those affected by the landfills and by their physical presence keeping the issue in the news.



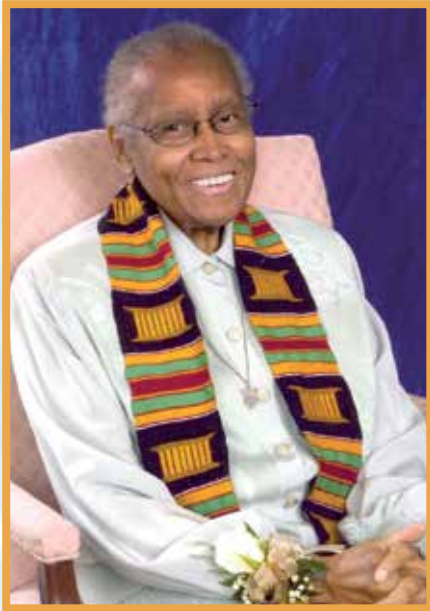
Through their impact investments and philanthropy the sisters are able to use their resources to extend their presence in a tangible way to sisters and brothers throughout the world who are struggling and in need.

It's not what the sisters have done. It's how they did what they did—and do what they do.



Over the past 145 years, the sisters have been present, graciously ministering to others. Through their care and compassion, they have brought the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate, healing Jesus to countless individuals as they have gone about their everyday responsibilities, seeing Jesus in others as they reveal Jesus within themselves.

Sisters in the Spotlight



M. Antona Ebo, FSM, was honored by the Missouri History Museum Sunday afternoon, July 30, 2017. The almost 2-hour event, “A Celebration of Sister Antona Ebo, FSM,” was part of the exhibit “#1 in Civil Rights: The African-American Freedom Struggle in St. Louis.” The online announcement read: “Sister Ebo has been a civil rights leader, a trailblazing hospital administrator, and a faithful servant of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1965 she traveled from St. Louis to Selma, Alabama, marching just days after Bloody Sunday. She continues to champion African American rights at age 93. Celebrate her life and legacy with this program of photos, videos, poetry, music, and testimonials from people whose lives have been touched by her work and her mission.”

The event was featured in Joe Holleman’s column in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on July 27, 2017.

The two-page article “Sister Ebo feted as example of living the Gospel message” by Jennifer Brinker appeared in the archdiocesan newspaper, the *St. Louis Review*, August 7–13, 2017. The event was live-streamed to Sr. Antona, who was not able to attend in person.

The inaugural Sister Antona Ebo Social Justice Conference, “Bearing Witness for Change,” named in honor of Sr. Antona Ebo and sponsored by the Peace and Justice Commission, Catholic Charities, St. Vincent de Paul Society, and six agencies of the archdiocese, was held September 30 at the Cardinal Rigali Center of the Archdiocese of St. Louis in Shrewsbury, Missouri.



Mary Joan Meyer, FSM, had 13 short poems—haiku—published in the April 2017 issue of *Fireflies’ Light: A Chapbook of Short Poems*, a collection of poetry published by the Department of English at Missouri Baptist University in St. Louis. Her work has appeared in the chapbooks for several years.

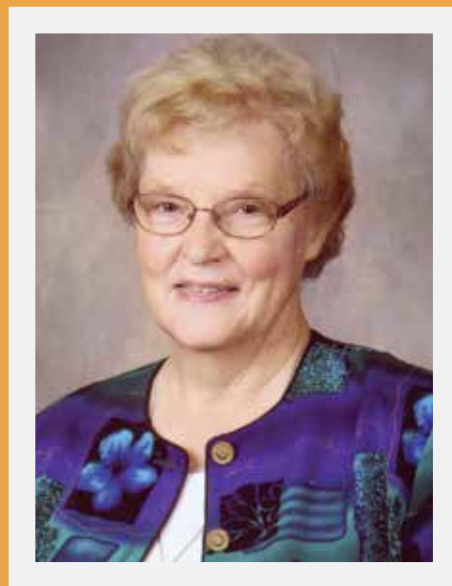


Judith Bell, FSM, has been honored as one of 2017's Ageless–Remarkable St. Louisans. The 15th annual gala, held October 28 at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch by St. Andrew's Resources for Seniors, celebrates "dynamic older adults who remain an active force in the St. Louis metropolitan area."

The program speaks of Sr. Judy's work as a nurse and nurse practitioner in St. Louis, Kansas City, Wisconsin, and remote areas of Appalachia and a Pima Native American reservation in Arizona. "As an administrator, she has trained and managed others, developed strategic programs, and led efforts to develop new care models to address the needs of the aged and infirmed." Sr. Judy is a current member of the FSM Leadership Team and Board President at The Sarah Community.

Seven FSM have previously been honored as Ageless– Remarkable St. Louisans: Sr. Bernard Marie Boland (2003), Sr. Betty Brucker (2003), Sr. Mary Leo Rita Volk (2004), Sr. Mary Noreen McGowan (2005), Sr. Jeanne Marie Meurer (2012), Sr. Thelma Marie Mitchell (2012), and Sr. Mary Antona Ebo (2015).

Congratulations to Our 2017 Jubilarian



Sr. Cecilia Lackman



in religious life
DIAMOND



Transitions



***“Arise,
My Beloved,
My Beautiful One,
and Come”***



Sr. Mary Joan Meyer, FSM

April 6, 1938 – August 20, 2017

Known for her stunning nature photography and insightful poetry, she created beautiful calendars and a journal, and her poems have been published. Her deep appreciation for all God’s creatures and desire to help them grow in their relationship to God led to her involvement in spiritual direction and pastoral care.

Mary Joan Meyer was born April 6, 1938, in the Baden area of St. Louis, oldest of five children born to Louis and Josephine (Herold) Meyer. On a visit to Lourdes, she heard God’s call to care for others; on September 1, 1963, she entered the Sisters of St. Mary. She received the religious name Sr. Mary Louis, and she professed final vows August 1, 1971.

She earned her bachelor’s in Physical Therapy (1970) and master’s in Spirituality (1978), both through Saint Louis University. She also earned her certificate in Spiritual Direction (1996) and a master’s in Pastoral Studies (1998) from Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis. She was a certified chaplain for many years.

She was the congregation’s secretary general from 1969 to 1976, practicing physical therapy part-time at St. Mary’s Health Center. She directed the SSM postulants and novices (1978–1991), also working in physical therapy at Mount St. Rose (1978–1986) and St. Joseph Hospital in St. Charles (1986–1987) and supervising physical therapy at the new St. Joseph Hospital West in Lake St. Louis (1987–1991).

From 1991 to 1995 Sr. Mary Joan served on the FSM Leadership Team. She then was chaplain and acting director of Spiritual Care at St. Mary’s Health Center (1997–2008).

In 2008 Sr. Mary Joan became Pastoral and Spiritual Life Coordinator at the FSM motherhouse. In May 2010, as the FSM began moving from the convent to The Sarah Community, Sr. Mary Joan became FSM Pastoral Care Facilitator. In February 2011 she moved to The Sarah Community.

Sr. Mary Joan enjoyed photography, writing poetry, reading and walking in nature; she loved spiritual direction and pastoral ministry. She loved living the FSM Mission—“to be the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate, healing Jesus.”

On August 20, 2017, Sr. Mary Joan joined her Beloved in eternal life.

Transitions continued

Sr. Mary Angelita Terrio, FSM

August 2, 1929 – June 12, 2017



***“I Have Loved
You with an
Everlasting Love”***

Adele Bernardine Terrio was born August 2, 1929, in St. Charles, Missouri, to George Oliver and Agnes (Stross) Terrio. She entered the Sisters of St. Mary August 4, 1944. She received the name Sr. Mary Angelita, and she professed final vows September 29, 1950. She completed her B.S. in Nursing from Saint Louis University in 1954.

As staff nurse and head nurse at St. Mary's Hospital in St. Louis until 1958, she loved caring for newborns and mothers. She taught nursing at Saint Louis University for a year, then was Director of Nursing at St. Mary's Hospital (1959–1960) and at Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center (1960–1967). At St. Joseph's Hospital in St. Charles, she was head nurse of the newborn division, referral assistant, and patient relations coordinator. In 1974 she left to work in the emergency room at St. Francis Hospital, Blue Island, Illinois. In the late 1970s and early 1980s she was an OB nurse at St. Mary's, St. Louis, and St. Elizabeth's, Hannibal; she also worked with the elderly at Smith Nursing Home and St. Francis Hospital in Marceline, Missouri.

She worked for a year at the new Mary Queen and Mother skilled nursing in St. Louis, then at Villa Marie Skilled Nursing Facility in Jefferson City (1982–1989). She moved to hospice nursing, serving at Mercy Hospice in Conway, South Carolina (1989–1991); St. Eugene's Haven Hospice in Dillon, South Carolina (1991–1995); and Mercy Hospice in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina (1992).

From 1996 to 1998 she was a Home Health nurse for Arcadia Valley Hospital, Pilot Knob. In 1998 she returned to Villa Marie, Jefferson City, providing pastoral care until she retired in September 2009. She volunteered at Villa Marie until moving to The Sarah Community in Bridgeton in May 2010.

Gentle and caring, known for her dedication and service, she was much beloved wherever she served. She loved to bake and often gave cookies to family and friends at Christmas.

On Monday, June 12, 2017, Sr. Angelita slipped away to join her beloved Spouse in heaven.



***“I Place
My Trust in You,
My God”***

Sr. Rose Maureen Mahoney, FSM

March 22, 1934 – September 27, 2017

Virginia Anne Mahoney was born March 22, 1934, in Hannibal, Missouri, to J. Frank and Rose C. (Shaw) Mahoney. Her brother is Rev. Robert J. Mahoney.

Virginia entered the Sisters of St. Mary March 1, 1954; she received the name Sr. Rose Maureen, and she professed final vows September 8, 1962.

She earned a bachelor's in Medical Records Administration through Saint Louis University (1960) and a master's in Health Service Management from Webster University (1983).

As assistant director of Medical Records at St. Mary's Health Center, she also taught Medical Records Administration at Saint Louis University (1960–1963). She directed Medical Records at St. Joseph's Hospital, St. Charles (1963–1967), at St. Mary's Health Center for a year, and at Saint Mary's Infirmary's Detoxification Center (1968).

From 1968 to 1977, she was Director of Medical Records at St. Eugene Hospital in Dillon, South Carolina. She coordinated Ambulatory and Emergency Outpatient Records at Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital (1978–1979). From 1979 through 1985 she was health care consultant for Cardinal Glennon and St. Mary on the Mount. She provided consultation on health information management and medical records until retiring in 2008.

She coauthored the 7th edition of *Understanding Medical Terminology*; for 25 years she edited it and ultimately became sole author.

She moved to The Sarah Community in May 2010.

Sr. Rose Maureen deeply valued contemplative prayer. She relished reading mystery novels. She enjoyed her work with *Understanding Medical Terminology* and valued consulting with clients to help pioneer changes; e.g., helping to set up a disaster response plan and establishing a Meals on Wheels program in Dillon, South Carolina.

Early Wednesday morning, September 27, 2017, Sr. Rose Maureen entered into eternal life.

JANUARY 1, 2017- JUNE 30, 2017 Gifts Received

Gifts given in memory of:

In memory of Marie Christine Berner, FSM
Mary Ruth Kettenbach

In memory of Marie Christine Berner, FSM
Pat Reed
Kathy and Tim Mayer

In memory of Marie Christine Berner, FSM
My sister
Jeanne C. West

In memory of Madeline Mary Coens, FSM
Dolores A. Weekly

In memory of Mary Dentlinger
Connie J. Dentlinger

In memory of Sr. Catherine Fischer, my great-aunt
Connie J. Dentlinger

In memory of Sr. Sienna Fischer, my great-aunt
Connie J. Dentlinger

In memory of Mary Damien Francois, FSM
My cousin
Kathryn F. Jancik

In memory of Florence Mary Imhoff, FSM
My aunt
Mr. Robert J. Baker

In memory of Mary Josepha Imhoff, FSM
My aunt
Mr. Robert J. Baker

In memory of Joseph Eugene (Gene) Koehl
Our cousin
John M. and Kathleen M. Koehl

In memory and honor of Sr. Mary Grace from St. Anthony
Hospital in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Roberta Jean Wishon

In memory of Agnes Reinkemeyer, FSM
Carolyn and Peter Rummel

In memory of the Sisters from St. Mary's Hospital,
Kansas City, Missouri
Mick Donahue

In memory of Mary Dorine Wittenbrink, FSM
Our aunt
Edward and Sally Froelich

In memory of Mary Dorine Wittenbrink, FSM
Our aunt
John and Sherrie Kumke

In memory of Mary Dorine Wittenbrink, FSM
Our great-aunt
Alice and Charlie Ohms

In memory of Mary Dorine Wittenbrink, FSM
My aunt
Karen A. Sommer

In memory of Mary Dorine Wittenbrink, FSM
Mr. and Mrs. Frank K. Spinner

In memory of Mary Dorine Wittenbrink, FSM
Boniface and Ellen Wittenbrink

In memory of Mary Dorine Wittenbrink, FSM
My aunt
Margaret M. Wittenbrink

Gifts given in honor of:

*In honor of Charles Alexander Alford
From his great-grandparents
Alex and Margaret Reinkemeyer*

*In honor of Francita Barringhaus, FSM,
on the occasion of her birthday, June 18
Mrs. Norma J. Schraut*

*In honor of Phyllis L. Clinton on the occasion of
her 90th birthday
Ms. Phyllis L. Clinton*

Donors

Steve and Karen Barney
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Pastor John E. Murrell
St. Clare Hospital and Health Services,
Baraboo, Wisconsin

Planned Giving

- Theresia C. Burkhart Estate
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- The Louis H. Koehler Foundation of St. Louis, Missouri

SEND US YOUR PRAYER REQUESTS

You can e-mail requests for prayer by clicking on the tab "Submit a prayer request" on our website (www.fsmonline.org) and filling out and submitting the form.

You can call us with your prayer requests: St. Louisans can reach us at (314) 768-1748; people outside the metropolitan area can call us toll-free at 1-877-768-1299.

Or mail us:

FSM Prayer Ministry
3221 McKelvey Road, Suite 107
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Mission and Focus of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary



The Mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary is to be the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate, healing Jesus.

Flowing from our Mission, we focus the power of our intention on compassionate care of Creation in collaboration with others.

The 2015 Chapter affirms our Focus and calls us to widen, deepen and emphasize its collaborative aspects.